

TOWN OF
FALMOUTH, MA

IMPRESSIONS OF
VISIT TO NORFOLK
ISLAND

2006.044.004

In the South Pacific
ocean latitude 29 degrees
South, longitude 169
degrees East, and about
500 miles from New
Zealand, the nearest other
land, lies a small
Island known as
Norfolk Island. Previous
to the Crimean war,
it was used by Great
Britain for a penal colony.
During the occupation
of the island by the
convicts splendid roads
were made. substantial
houses built, and many
other works were finished

by convict labor and at the time of the breaking out of the war, the island was in first rate condition for the use of whoever might live there. At this time the British government released the prisoners on the condition that they enlist in the British army to fight in the Crimea. accordingly the island was left without inhabitants. About this time the British government having learned that Pitcairn Island had be-

come over populated by the descendants of the mutineers of the British brig Bounty. offered to transport them to Norfolk Island free of charge, many of them accepted the offer, and they or their descendants live there to this day. Norfolk Island became a favorite recruiting place for the whalers cruising in those waters, and there the writer was born in December 1857. In 1886 and the two following years I had the pleasure

of visiting my birth-
place. four or five
times, and although I
was not permitted to
make any long visits
ashore, yet I saw con-
siderable of the island
and its people. The
island is small, only
about seven miles wide
and twelve long. the
climate is very even and
agreeable. the situation
being such that extremes of
heat or cold are unknown.
It is well wooded and
Fertile. and very beauty-
ful to look upon

from the sea especially
to the eyes of the sailor
who may have not seen
land before for six months.
It's people live in a very
simple style, as of necessity they must. being so
far removed from the
rest of the world. To
them the arrival of a
whaleship, steamer or the
mission schooner Southern
Cross is a great event.
They are very hospitable and welcome eagerly any visitors to the
island. I found many
there who remembered

my father and mother
and they were all desir-
ous to entertain me
when I could be on
shore. They are a very
religious people and
prior to the time of
my first visit there
had been but one church.
that being the English
Church. About that time
there arrived on the isl-
and, an evangelist, who
it was said was of the
Second Advent faith.
Many of the islanders were
attracted to him, and
they formed a separate

religious society, thereby causing much trouble and dissension among themselves. There is maintained on the island a mission school connected with the Melanesian Missions at which they are attempting to educate some of the natives of the New Hebrides Islands with the view to sending them as missionaries and teachers among their own people, but I believe with poor success. Connected with the mission is a vessel named the

Southern Cross that makes
regular trips between
New Zealand and the
New Hebrides islands,
touching at Norfolk
Island each trip.

On my last visit to
the island in September
1888 I spent two days
on shore, the guest of
friends who had
known my father and
mother more than thirty
years before.

The islands were
mourning the decline of
the whaling industry
and the fact that

one ship was the last
that they expected to see
for a long time.

So we took leave of
them, probably never
to meet again

Augustus Lawrence
Falmouth Feb 23rd
1907